



Finding ways to reduce
the impact of homelessness and
poverty on the lives of children

INSTITUTE
FOR CHILDREN
& POVERTY

FACT SHEET on domestic VIOLENCE

SPRING 2009 Update

Homelessness and Violence Against Women: Inside and Outside of New York City

New York City: Homelessness and Violence Against Women

Poverty disproportionately affects women.

- Over 95% of homeless parents are women.¹
- The typical homeless parent is a poor, unemployed, single woman in her twenties with two children.²

Intimate partner violence is one of the primary reasons for homelessness.

- Almost 50% of all homeless female heads of household have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV).³
- In 2005, the City of New York spent an estimated \$227.9 million on domestic violence. However long-term prevention, such as educational training and permanent housing, received the smallest share of the city's spending at \$3.8 million (1.67%).⁴
- One-quarter of homeless parents believe intimate partner violence is the cause of their homelessness.⁵
- Homeless parents with a foster care history are more likely to become homeless as adults because of intimate partner violence when compared with homeless parents without a foster care history (23% vs. 15%).⁶
- Currently, there are 2,084 domestic violence emergency shelter beds citywide. Police responded to 229,354 domestic violence incidents in 2007.⁷

Homeless women are more likely to experience lifetime exposure to violence.

- Homeless women with childhood abuse histories report higher rates of violence exposure as adults.⁸
- Seventy percent of homeless women report a history of childhood emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and 63% report experiencing violence as adults.⁹

Across the Nation: Homelessness and Intimate Partner Violence

- Intimate partners committed 20% of all violent crime against women in 2001.¹⁰
- Women ages 20 to 24 are more likely to be victimized by an intimate when compared with other age groups.¹¹
- Women living in households with annual incomes below the poverty line experienced the highest rates of IPV.¹²
- Women separated from their spouses reported higher rates of IPV than women of other marital status.¹³
- Women renting housing were victimized at three times the rate of women who owned their own homes.¹⁴

The impact of intimate partner violence is far-reaching and tends to create roadblocks for low-income families seeking safe, affordable housing.

- Women experiencing IPV tend to have poor rental, credit, and employment histories because of their partners' abusive behaviors. Such constraints affect their ability to secure affordable permanent housing.¹⁵
- Landlords adopting "zero tolerance for crime" policies may evict IPV victims on the basis that domestic violence is a crime. Such policies penalize tenants who are the recipients, not the perpetrators, of abuse.¹⁶
- A tenant's risk of homelessness increases when IPV leads to loud noise, property damage, and police visits to the home.¹⁷
- Survivors of IPV often place themselves at risk for revictimization by returning to abusive partners when viable options for permanent housing do not exist.¹⁸
- When families are without safe housing, they are at an elevated risk of exposure to violence in the streets, which includes witnessing violence and experiencing physical and sexual assault.¹⁹

Endnotes

- ¹Institute for Children and Poverty (2001). *Deja vu: Family Homelessness in New York City*. New York: Author.
- ²Ibid.
- ³Institute for Children and Poverty (2002). *The hidden migration: Why New York City shelters are overflowing with families*. New York: Author.
- ⁴New York City Independent Budget Office (June 2007). *City spending on domestic violence: A review*. Retrieved August 23, 2008, from <http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/>
- ⁵Institute for Children and Poverty (2002). *The hidden migration: Why New York City shelters are overflowing with families*. New York: Author.
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (2008). *Domestic violence second quarter fact sheet year 2008*. Retrieved August 24, 2008, from http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2008_2ndQuarterDVFactSheet.pdf
- ⁸Institute for Children and Poverty (1998). *Day to day...parent to child: The future of violence among homeless children in America*. New York: Author.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Bureau of Justice Statistics (February 2003). *Intimate partner violence, 1993–2001*. Retrieved August 25, 2008, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipv01.pdf>
- ¹¹Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007). *Intimate partner violence in the U.S.* Retrieved August 25, 2008, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵National Center on Family Homelessness (2008). *The characteristics and needs of families experiencing homelessness* (citing Reif, S. and Kushner, L., *Subsidized housing and unique needs of domestic violence victims*), National Center on Law and Poverty (2000).
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Correia, A. and Rubin, J. (2001). *Housing and battered women* (citing Correia, A., *Housing and battered women: A case study of domestic violence programs in Iowa*, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (1999).
- ¹⁹The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2004). *Facts on trauma and homeless children*. Retrieved August 24, 2008 from http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/promising_practices/Facts_on_Trauma_and_Homeless_Children.pdf

The Institute for Children and Poverty (ICP) is an independent non-profit research organization based in New York City. ICP studies the impact of poverty on family and child well-being and generates research that will enhance public policies and programs affecting poor or homeless children and their families. Specifically, ICP examines the condition of extreme poverty in the United States and its effect on educational attainment, housing, employment, child welfare, domestic violence, and family wellness. Please visit our Web site for more information. www.icpny.org

